



The VOICE

Brought to you by the MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION in Niagara County, Inc.

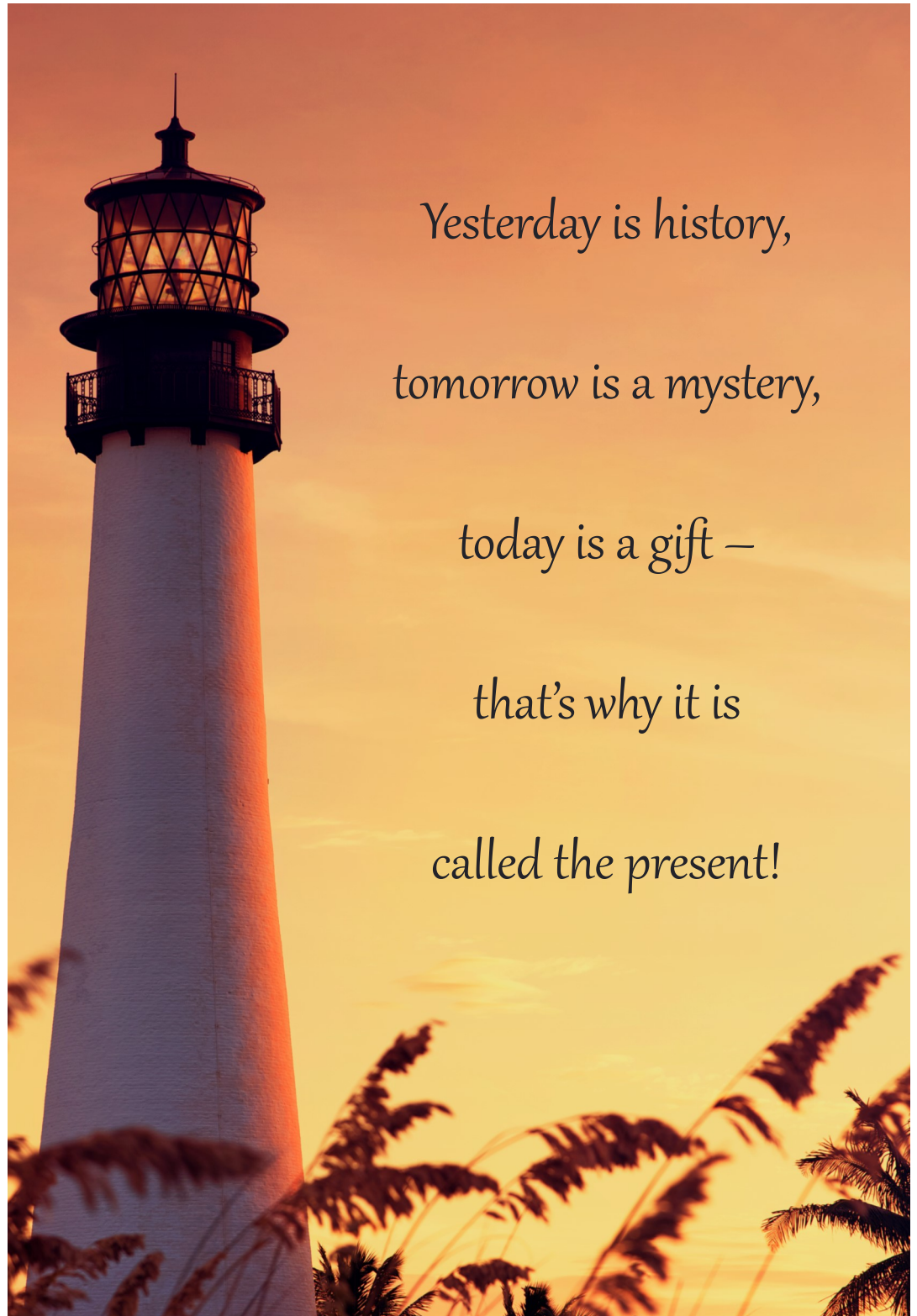
Fall 2019

36 Pine Street | Lockport, NY 14094 | (716) 433-3780 | www.mhanc.com

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Call us or go online at
www.mhanc.com.



*Yesterday is history,
tomorrow is a mystery,
today is a gift –
that's why it is
called the present!*

From the Desk of the
Board President

As summer winds down, and fall is quickly upon us, I would like to take this opportunity to thank so many of you that support the Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. and our goal of promoting wellness through advocacy, education and community service programs. From our caring and tireless staff members, to our volunteer Board of Directors, to our countless supporters – both financial and by way of your time and compassion, the dedication to our organization has never been so evident as in the last few months.

It is with mixed emotions that I take over this message and address you all as Board of Directors President. Usually, our Executive Director would update you on recent events and wish you well. If you have not heard, Cheryl Blacklock, after 11 years of dedicated service, has retired and is enjoying the rest and relaxation with her family that she so deserves. Cheryl – we wish YOU well and know that your care and compassion will continue to have a positive impact on those around you!

Yet, while we find ourselves temporarily without an Executive Director, I can assure you that the MHA is continuing to flourish and grow. Our programs are well led, the day to day office work is running smoothly, and everyone has taken on this recent change with a new outlook to the future. Program Directors are presenting new ideas and creative solutions to ensure that our clients receive the care to which they are accustomed, and have shown they are willing to step up to the challenge of moving our organization into the future. I expected nothing less! Likewise, I would like to commend our Board of Directors members, many of whom are relatively new to their positions, in their willingness to dig in, meet more often, and make themselves available whenever possible.

Change can be unexpected and difficult, but I have every confidence in our abilities and desire to work together to promote MHANC as the community lifeline and support safe haven it has been, and will continue to be, for many more years!

Be kind, be strong, be well,

Becky Wydysk



A few of our hard-working staff members: Danielle Conlan (Community Education), Sara Carlson (Compeer Niagara), Mary Ann Scales (HR and

PROGRAM UPDATE:

Compeer Niagara



Tara Porter, Director
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 Ext. 307

“Fall Into Friendship”

After a summer full of friendship and fun, we’ll be starting this fall season with apple picking at Becker Farms! Everyone is excited to ride a wagon to the orchard, pick apples, and take them home to enjoy. Compeer Niagara friends have already talked about all of the homemade apple crisp, pies, and treats that will be made thanks to this event. Does baking with a friend or enjoying your friend’s company over a cup of coffee and their dessert sound good to you? Join Compeer Niagara! Something so simple, flexible, and enjoyable can change someone’s life.



More Fun Activities!

Throughout the rest of the year we will also be enjoying our annual Harvest Banquet, exploring the Power Vista, feel-good crafting, and having our annual Christmas Party with White Elephant Bingo! The Compeer Niagara Kids Program will be going on hikes, doing a scavenger hunt, learning about our

NEW SCHOOL PROGRAM!

We are excited to announce that along with these events, Compeer Niagara will be serving youth in a new creative format. This school year we have teamed up with the Lockport City School District to pilot a unique “match” experience for 24 students. Our hope is to follow our grassroots approach, where we start small and grow, allowing Compeer Niagara to have a big impact on our Niagara County community.

Thank You

Our previous “Friend-raiser” Raffle was a success thanks to the generous donations from local Lockport businesses: Tops, Sub Delicious, Family Video, Molinaro’s Ristorante, and Lockport Palace Theater. Thank you to these caring businesses and

“FRIEND” RAISER RAFFLE

Tickets \$5 each

PRIZE INCLUDES:

Free bread for a year from Panera Bread
 (1 free loaf of bread per month for 1 year)
 Spaghetti dinner basket from Village Eatery
 \$25 gift card to Village Eatery
 pasta and sauce · pasta strainer · cheese shaker
 coffee mug · wine

- * The winning ticket will be drawn on Friday, November 15th
- * Live on Facebook
www.facebook.com/MHANIagara
- * Winner will be contacted via phone.

Contact a Compeer Niagara staff member to purchase tickets! **(716) 433-3780**



Compeer Niagara is...

making friends, having fun, being involved in your community, helping others, meeting new people, trying new things, and so much more. Please contact us at 433-3780 or visit our website, www.mhanc.com for more information

PROGRAM UPDATE:

Inpatient Mental Health Peer Specialist Program

Crystal Hites, Director
chites@mhanc.com

Messages of Hope from the Staff

As the Director of this program, I emphasize to my employees that we cannot tell others to grow themselves if we are not doing the same. I take this stance with myself as well. I can't encourage patients to grow, try new things and take risks if I am not doing the same!

Personally, the last two months have taught me many lessons about how wonderful my supports really are, and about building my own confidence, affirming myself, and taking risks that can improve my life. This thought came to me as I was pondering my own readiness for change in life:

One day, the butterfly clambers out of its chrysalis, and it realizes there is something profoundly different about itself. It takes a risk—it jumps into the air, and it flies. Now, caterpillars come from eggs. No loving parent ever reassured that caterpillar that it would fly someday. It spent its life wriggling around pretty much worm-like, without a single day ever dedicated to the use of wings. It never took college courses on how to fly. It has nothing on its resume about flight. It was probably never even on an airplane! No one comes around and encourages it, or gives it "permission" to be its new self. And yet somehow it instinctively believes in itself, knows it is ready, and knows that some wonderful magic called flight exists and this magic is meant just for it. And so it jumps, and it flies.

These past months have me knowing myself and my capabilities and weaknesses better, and taking flight.

Read below to learn what my superb Inpatient Peer Specialist employees have been up to. And so our program grows...because we grow.

**Rhiannon O'Shea, Inpatient Peer Specialist**

When I started with the Mental Health Association, I was just beginning to understand how critical my past was to the success of my future. Since then, I've learned to encourage myself, appreciate myself, and praise myself more often. I feel more eager to communicate with those I see and meet, and to express myself in all aspects of my life. I've become more calm, understanding, and fulfilled as a human being because of this dream position.

Michael Kelly, Inpatient Peer Specialist

Someone once introduced me to a book entitled *As A Man Thinketh*, written by James Allen. It's a small book, and takes about 20 minutes to read. However, its message is quite profound. Even by implementing only a few of the principles I read about into my daily routine, it's had a massively positive impact on the way I started living my life. I highly recommend giving it a thorough reading.

PROGRAM UPDATE:

In-Home Respite

The In-Home Respite Program has made exciting progress since the last issue of The VOICE. We have added 3 awesome staff members and welcomed 4 new families into the program! The program is now able to serve families more effectively, which is so rewarding! Our continued growth is a reflection of the needs of families in Niagara County, and we are happy to be able to help by giving caregivers a well-deserved break. If you are interested in learning more about the In-Home Respite Program, please visit our website, www.mhanc.com, or give us a call at (716) 433-3780.

Sara Carlson, Coordinator
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 Ext. 313



Picture drawn by a child in the In-Home Respite Program.



Meet our Interns

Clarissa

My name is Clarissa Surianello and I am a senior at Niagara University. I am a psychology major with a Women's Studies minor. I am from Clarence, NY but plan to move to Buffalo after graduation and continue my studies in a master's program for mental health counseling. I am really looking forward to my time with the MHA and I am excited to become a part of the community.

Mara

My name is Mara Scive and I am a senior at Niagara University. I'm a psychology major with a minor in criminal justice. I am from North Tonawanda, New York. After I finish my BA in Psychology, I plan on going to grad school for mental health counseling. I am passionate about raising awareness of mental illness and breaking the stigma that surrounds it. I'm excited to intern and I am looking forward to getting more involved with the



The MHA has welcomed two Niagara University students to intern with us this semester. You'll see them at the MHA, Compeer Niagara events, and out in the community spreading awareness



PROGRAM UPDATE:

Community Education

Danielle Conlan, Coordinator

dconlan@mhanc.com

Wellness Activities

We have continued our new series, Twelve Months of Wellness, with a new topic or activity each month. We invited people to make a Self-Care Toolbox, learn Mind Mapping as a tool for problem solving, try-out Creative Problem Solving, and just show up for snacks and conversation at “Coffee Hour.” See what else is coming up by visiting on our website!

Support Group Facilitator Training

Our annual training is offered to anyone who wishes to learn the basics of leading a support group, brush up on some skills or learn a few new techniques. It will take place on Friday, November 8 from 9:00am to 12:00pm at the Lockport Public Library. The cost is only \$20 and all participants will receive a certificate and a facilitator starter kit, which includes a Facilitation Guide from Mental Health America’s Center for Peer Support. You can register online by visiting www.mhanc.com and selecting the Events tab. Also, you can email pszalay@mhanc.com or call us at 716-433-3780.

Free Mental Health Presentations for Schools

For staff and students. For more information regarding presentation topics and scheduling, visit our website or call us at (716) 433-3780, ext. 303.



Helpful Books at the MHA Library

Our library at the MHA is small but mighty, and attempts to provide information and support on a variety of topics. Two books on the shelves that deal with parenting issues are “The Explosive Child” by Ross W. Greene Ph.D. and “More than Moody” by Harold S. Koplewicz, M.D.

You may be parenting a child who seems fine, but occasionally presents behavior that seems out of the ordinary, and out of control. Or your child has reached the teen years and that once sunny disposition is now frequently dark and moody. It’s possible that nothing is really “wrong” but reading more about the subject may help you to make decisions about how to parent, when to discipline and when to seek professional help. Learn skills that reinforce your confidence in your parenting and help you negotiate the challenges and pitfalls of family life.

Exploring any subject in depth can only help strengthen the skills needed to rise to the challenge of raising a child in today’s world. The MHA is here to support you.



A Special Thanks to the Transit Drive-In for its generous donation!



The MHA wants to send a special thank you to the Transit Drive-In for donating to us the proceeds from the August 20th retro night! The featured movies were “Stand By Me” (1986) and “The Outsiders” (1983). The drive-in staff and audience were very welcoming to the MHA staff and tons of information was handed out at our community table outside the Starlight Snack Stand. It was a great night! Thank you Transit Drive-In!

Social Media Update

MHA is now on
Instagram!

Plus you can continue to
follow us on Facebook
and Twitter.



Instagram



Facebook



Twitter



The Many Faces of Mental Health

**On LCTV
Channel 20
Tuesdays at 5 pm and 10 pm**

(see TV listings for additional times)

All programs are produced by
MHA in Niagara County, Inc.

The September show featured **Rhiannon O’Shea** speaking about her personal journey to become a Peer Specialist at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center for Inpatient Mental Health. Coming up next: **Danielle Conlan**, the MHA Community Education Coordinator, talks about the impact of MHA programs in the community. Those interested can view the show in our office during regular office hours, or can consult LCTV listings for *The Many Faces of Mental Health*.



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
in Niagara County

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Note-Worthy

12 Months of Mental Wellness!

1-hour sessions on a variety of topics—open to all!
See our website for the latest offering.

Support Group Facilitator Training

Friday, November 8 from 9am to noon
At the Lockport Public Library
Cost: \$20 includes materials and certificate. Registration required.

Support Group Meetings

Contact us for topics, times and locations.

Poinsettia and Wreath Sale

Beautiful holiday-greens that adorn your home—with proceeds benefitting the many important programs here at the MHA! See inside for flier.

Call MHA at 716-433-3780 or visit www.mhanc.com for more information!

Mission Statement

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. will offer programs and services aimed at promoting mental health while advocating for individuals with mental illnesses and working toward dispelling commonly held misunderstandings regarding mental illnesses.

Executive Board

Interim Executive Director: Mary Ann Scales
Board President: Rebecca Wydysh
Board Vice President: Emily Shields
Secretary: Alix Hutchison
Treasurer: Joel Grundy

Board Members

Brian Bloom	Ryan Parisi
Kristen Braunscheidel	Robert Richards
Lauren Hearn	Katherine Zunner
Sarah Mack	

The Mental Health Association in Niagara County, Inc. is funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Niagara County Department of Mental Health, the United Way of Greater Niagara, the United Way of the Tonawandas, grants, memberships and voluntary contributions.